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Seventeenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

I. Introduction

1. The current report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) since the last report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/406) was issued on 1 July 2011.

2. The situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remained generally stable during the reporting period. The cessation of hostilities established in August 2006 between the parties continued to hold, in spite of a serious incident on 1 August where the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces personnel briefly exchanged fire on the Wazzani River across the Blue Line.

3. On 26 July 2011, a UNIFIL logistics convoy was hit by an explosion caused by a roadside bomb south of the town of Saida. Six peacekeepers serving with the French contingent were injured, three of whom were transported to France for treatment. It was the second terrorist attack against UNIFIL within two months.

4. On 7 July, Prime Minister Mikati's Government won the vote of confidence of the Lebanese Parliament. In its ministerial statement, the Government expressed its commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). In keeping with that commitment, Prime Minister Mikati visited southern Lebanon and UNIFIL headquarters just a few days after his Government was sworn in.

5. The parties maintained their commitment to resolution 1701 (2006), ensuring that the cessation of hostilities continued to hold. However, they failed to make significant progress in the implementation of other key obligations under resolution 1701 (2006), as described in greater detail in this report. The parties should make every effort to meet their obligations under the resolution if progress towards a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution between them, as called for in the resolution, is to be achieved.

6. The unrest in the Syrian Arab Republic since mid-March continued to impact Lebanon in different ways. The crisis in Syria remained a central and polarizing concern for Lebanese political actors. Several thousand people crossed Lebanon's northern border in the last six months, fleeing violence in Syrian towns close to the border. The Syrian army also carried out a number of cross-border actions, including shooting across the border and conducting a number of raids within the territory of Lebanon.

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II. Implementation of resolution 1701 (2006)

A. Situation in the UNIFIL area of operations

7. In the early morning on 1 August, Israel Defense Forces soldiers opened the technical fence and carried out a foot patrol in the valley along the Wazzani River. Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers monitored their movement. According to the Lebanese Armed Forces, one of its soldiers identified Israel Defense Forces soldiers at the entrance of a resort complex on the west bank of the river north of the Blue Line. The Lebanese Armed Forces said that it had fired warning shots in the air to counter an intrusion into Lebanese territory, and that the warning fire had ceased when it became clear that the Israel Defense Forces soldiers were back on the eastern side of the river. Some 10 minutes later, fire from the Israel Defense Forces perforated water tanks at a nearby Lebanese Armed Forces position. The Israel Defense Forces maintained that its soldiers did not cross either the river or the Blue Line at any point during the activity. Rather, they came under fire from a Lebanese Armed Forces soldier as they completed their ascent back up the hill towards the technical fence, and immediately returned fire.

8. UNIFIL was not present at the location at the time of the incident, and was notified by the parties only after the incident had taken place. Upon receiving notification, UNIFIL immediately dispatched a patrol to the site to monitor the situation and intervene as required. The Deputy Force Commander communicated with his counterparts, urging the restoration of calm. UNIFIL immediately launched an investigation and both parties, while giving contradictory accounts of the incident, cooperated in providing relevant information. The UNIFIL investigation concluded that the exchange of fire between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces constituted a breach of the cessation of hostilities and a violation of resolution 1701 (2006). However, UNIFIL was unable to determine whether a ground violation of the Blue Line had occurred. Following the incident, UNIFIL increased the number of its patrols in the area.

9. The Israel Defense Forces continued its occupation of the northern part of Ghajar village and an adjacent area of land north of the Blue Line, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). In an effort to facilitate the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the area, UNIFIL finalized its proposal for security arrangements, and dispatched it to the parties for their approval on 25 June. On 19 July, the Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that it approved the arrangements, while emphasizing that they represented only a first phase in a process that would lead to Lebanon exercising its full sovereignty over the area. The Israel Defense Forces informed UNIFIL that the arrangements would require the approval of the Government of Israel. To date, the United Nations has not received any response from the Government of Israel.

10. The Israel Defense Forces continued to make almost daily intrusions into Lebanese airspace, mainly by unmanned aerial vehicles, but also by fighter jets. These overflights are violations of resolution 1701 (2006), as well as of Lebanese sovereignty. UNIFIL has continued to protest all air violations, calling on the Israeli authorities to cease them immediately. The Government of Lebanon also protested the violations, while the Government of Israel continued to maintain that the overflights are a necessary security measure.

11. There were several ground violations of the Blue Line, mostly inadvertent, by Lebanese shepherds tending livestock in the Shab'a Farms and Kafr Shouba areas, and by farmers harvesting olives in their fields near Blida. In July and early August, UNIFIL observed at least two incidents during which the same vehicle violated the Blue Line to the south of El Adeisse, while its occupants photographed the area. The Israel Defense Forces alleged that the occupants of the car were a Hizbullah reconnaissance team, while the Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that they were likely land surveyors. On 31 August, a foreign national, employed in Lebanon, violated the Blue Line when the individual illegally crossed into Israel close to Maroun ar-Ra's.

12. There were three incidents in August where UNIFIL observed Israel Defense Forces or Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers aiming their weapons across the Blue Line at soldiers on the other side. On 2 August, a Lebanese Armed Forces soldier aimed his rocket-propelled grenade at an Israel Defense Forces tank during the course of an Israel Defense Forces patrol between the technical fence and the Blue Line near Meiss al-Jabal. On 24 August, Israel Defense Forces soldiers aimed their weapons at the Lebanese Armed Forces observation post in Kafr Kila, and the Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers reciprocated in kind. On 28 August, there was a similar incident at Kafr Kila, this time initiated by Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers when they aimed their weapons at Israel Defense Forces soldiers on patrol, who responded by doing the same in the direction of the Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers. On both occasions, UNIFIL personnel interposed themselves between the Lebanese Armed Forces and Israel Defense Forces soldiers to neutralize the situation.

13. There were a number of other incidents observed by UNIFIL along the Blue Line, particularly in the area of Kafr Kila, including several abusive verbal exchanges between Lebanese Armed Forces and Israel Defense Forces personnel and between Lebanese civilians and Israel Defense Forces personnel, and at least four incidents of stone throwing by Lebanese civilians at the Israeli technical fence and passing Israel Defense Forces patrols. On a number of occasions, UNIFIL observed Israel Defense Forces patrol vehicles stationed in the area pointing their gun turrets towards Lebanese territory. UNIFIL further reinforced its deployment in the area, urged the parties to exercise maximum restraint and called on them to utilize its liaison mechanism rather than taking any form of unilateral action that might increase tensions.

14. During the reporting period, the Lebanese authorities arrested two Lebanese individuals with links to the militant group Fatah al-Islam, who are accused of having fired a rocket from Houla in southern Lebanon into Israel in October 2009. The two individuals were referred for prosecution to the Lebanese military court. The trial is scheduled to take place on 25 November 2011.

15. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued their close cooperation, and sought to further expand and enhance their coordinated activities. The two Forces maintained their respective deployments and installations, with the Lebanese Armed Forces retaining a steady deployment of three brigades and two battalions throughout the reporting period. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued their daily operational activities, including at least 35 coordinated activities per day, and conducted joint capability exercises, at the same levels as described in my last

report (S/2011/406). In addition, UNIFIL began operating a seventh co-located checkpoint along the Litani River.

16. UNIFIL generally enjoyed freedom of movement throughout its area of operations, carrying out approximately 9,000 to 10,000 patrols each month. A small number of those patrols were subject to freedom of movement restrictions, involving members of the local population throwing stones and taking United Nations property, such as cameras, geographical information systems, communication equipment and maps, from UNIFIL personnel. Most stolen equipment was later returned by the Lebanese Armed Forces. A few incidents included cases of physical assault against UNIFIL personnel.

17. On 26 June, near Shaqra, a UNIFIL patrol was stopped by individuals who threatened the UNIFIL personnel, carried out aggressive searches, and left the site, taking with them UNIFIL GPS devices, communication equipment and maps. A Lebanese Armed Forces officer who was present observed the incident without intervening. On 27 June, a UNIFIL logistics convoy of eight vehicles travelling from Beirut was blocked by a crowd of civilians near Srifa. The Lebanese Armed Forces arrived to contain the situation. Stones were subsequently thrown at UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces personnel, lightly injuring two UNIFIL soldiers and damaging their vehicles. On 29 June, individuals fired pistols from a passing car at a UNIFIL checkpoint near the Khardaly Bridge on the Litani River. Given that it could not locate any impacts, UNIFIL assessed that the pistols were likely unloaded air pistols, which simulated the sound of small-arms fire. On 31 July, UNIFIL personnel, while verifying an earlier observation of an individual armed with a pistol near Hanin, were assaulted by a crowd of civilians and their patrol vehicles damaged. Lebanese Armed Forces personnel, called to the scene to control and disperse the crowd, did not intervene and the situation escalated. Civilians forced open the doors of two UNIFIL patrol vehicles, and took two GPS devices, a camera and a map. Several individuals among the crowd were observed carrying side arms, and the Lebanese Armed Forces subsequently confirmed that they were Lebanese Armed Forces intelligence officers in civilian clothes. On 13 September, a UNIFIL patrol was blocked by a crowd of civilians near Ayta ash-Sha'b. The civilians would not allow the patrol to proceed before the Lebanese Armed Forces arrived, and one civilian broke through the UNIFIL cordon established around the vehicles, lightly injured a UNIFIL soldier, and took one GPS. When the Lebanese Armed Forces arrived at the site, its personnel were unable to secure the immediate release of the UNIFIL equipment. On 26 September, UNIFIL personnel in an armoured personnel carrier mistakenly crossed the Litani River and drove outside the area of operations in the vicinity of Arnoun. While outside the area of operations, the UNIFIL personnel were stopped by five cars containing some 15 individuals armed with assault rifles. The individuals aimed their weapons at the armoured personnel carrier, searched the vehicle, and took some maps and documentation. The Lebanese Armed Forces later escorted the vehicle back inside the UNIFIL area of operations.

18. UNIFIL strongly protested all freedom of movement restrictions and cases of physical assault to the Lebanese Armed Forces, and called on the Lebanese authorities to take action against individuals involved in these incidents. The authorities assured UNIFIL that they take these incidents seriously, and pledged to provide UNIFIL with the results of its investigations.

19. Despite the incidents reported above, the attitude of the local population towards UNIFIL remained generally positive. The Force's Civil Affairs Office and civil-military coordination teams worked to mitigate frictions between the local population and UNIFIL, and to ensure a timely response to any concerns or complaints. The Civil Affairs Office and civil-military coordination teams continued their regular liaison and outreach activities, including through a series of sports, cultural, and children's festivals with the local population during the summer holidays. Quick-impact projects continued to be implemented through troop-contributing countries, as well as the UNIFIL budget, and the former continued to provide educational programmes and medical, dental and veterinary assistance.

20. UNIFIL continued to provide assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces in taking steps to establish an area free of armed personnel, assets and weapons between the Blue Line and the Litani River, other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL. During the reporting period, UNIFIL encountered a number of individuals carrying hunting weapons inside the area of operations, in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006). In response, the Lebanese Armed Forces issued a statement reminding the local population of the ban on hunting and the requirements of resolution 1701 (2006), and the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL worked together to curb all hunting activities. UNIFIL activities did not discover any new arms caches, military materiel or infrastructure during the reporting period, nor did the Force find evidence that previously discovered former armed element facilities had been reactivated.

21. The Government of Israel continued to allege that Hizbullah had been building up its military positions and units inside populated areas in southern Lebanon and that unauthorized weapons were being transferred into Lebanon, including into the UNIFIL area of operations. In cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL immediately investigates any claim regarding the illegal presence of armed personnel or weapons in its area of operations if specific information is received. The Force remains determined to act with all means available within its mandate and to the full extent provided for in its rules of engagement, as described in my previous reports. To date, UNIFIL has neither been provided with, nor found, evidence of the unauthorized transfer of arms into its area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces Command continued to state that it would act immediately to put a stop to any illegal activity in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006) and relevant Government decisions.

22. The UNIFIL maritime task force continued to carry out its dual mandate of conducting maritime interdiction operations and training of Lebanese naval forces. Since my last report, Lebanese navy and customs officials inspected 344 vessels identified as potentially of interest, and cleared them all. UNIFIL and the Lebanese naval forces conducted 22 workshops and 300 at-sea training exercises during the reporting period.

23. Incidents along the line of buoys continued to occur, with the Israel Defense Forces dropping depth charges or firing flares and warning shots along the buoy line. UNIFIL has no mandate to monitor the line of buoys, which the Government of Israel installed unilaterally and which the Government of Lebanon does not recognize. At the request of the parties, UNIFIL is engaged in exploratory bilateral discussions with both sides on maritime security issues in general, and the parties agreed to discuss these issues through the tripartite mechanism, with the possible

inclusion of naval experts. UNIFIL remains ready to assist the parties regarding maritime security issues, in accordance with its mandate under resolution 1701 (2006).

B. Security and liaison arrangements

24. UNIFIL continued to carry out its liaison and coordination with both parties, as set out in my last report (S/2011/406) and previous ones. Daily interaction and liaison activities between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces was recently enhanced through the deployment of additional Lebanese Armed Forces liaison officers throughout the South Litani Sector. UNIFIL also maintained effective liaison and coordination with the Israel Defense Forces. There was no progress in establishing a UNIFIL office in Tel Aviv.

25. Monthly tripartite meetings, chaired by the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander and attended by senior Lebanese Armed Forces and Israel Defense Forces representatives, continued to provide strategic level liaison and coordination, remained the key mechanism to address security and military operational issues related to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), and played an important confidence-building role.

26. During the reporting period, UNIFIL and the parties held discussions within the tripartite forum regarding the events of 15 May, and the 1 August exchange of fire between Lebanese Armed Forces and Israel Defense Forces personnel. Both parties fully cooperated with the investigations of UNIFIL into the two incidents, and provided relevant information. UNIFIL finalized the investigation regarding the events of 15 May and delivered its investigation report to the parties regarding the exchange of fire on 1 August. With regard to the events of 15 May, the final report of UNIFIL reconfirmed the conclusions as set out in paragraph 9 of my last report (S/2011/406).

27. UNIFIL also put forward important recommendations with regard to the incident of 1 August, with a view to preventing incidents along the Blue Line in the future. The UNIFIL Force Commander called on both parties in the tripartite forum to observe three critical points. First, they should act with maximum restraint and avoid any kind of unilateral action, including any action that might be perceived as sensitive or provocative by the other side. Second, they should utilize the UNIFIL liaison and coordination mechanism to the full extent, and address all issues of tension through the Force. Third, they should avoid the use of fire in any circumstance, except where clearly required in immediate self-defence. UNIFIL emphasized that it is critical that these measures be applied at all times by all soldiers on the ground.

28. UNIFIL also urged the parties to implement specific recommendations contained within its investigation report into the events of 15 May. The parties responded by putting into effect several key recommendations. As reported in my last report, the Lebanese Armed Forces took measures to prevent similar demonstrations along the Blue Line in early June. On 26 August, it took measures to ensure that a ceremony at Maroun ar-Ra's marking "Jerusalem Day" occurred without incident. The Government of Lebanon also assured that it would do all it could to prevent a repetition of the events of 15 May, including imposing measures to restrict demonstrators' access to the Blue Line. During the same period, the Israel

Defense Forces informed UNIFIL that it had issued its soldiers with appropriate instructions, which were prepared taking into account what had occurred on 15 May, and that its troops were undergoing training in crowd control tactics and equipment. The Israel Defense Forces also emphasized that, in the event of another incident, it would not tolerate any attempt to interfere with the technical fence and would take all necessary measures to stop anyone from crossing it.

29. The tripartite forum also had discussions on other security and military operational issues, including ensuring full respect for the integrity of the Blue Line in its entirety, and seeking solutions to ease sporadic tensions between armed forces personnel of both parties in the Kafr Kila area. UNIFIL is seeking to extend specific operational procedures in the Kafr Kila and El Adeisse areas, and to expand them to other areas where incidents occasionally occur. The forum also sought to ensure further progress in visibly marking the Blue Line, and to encourage understanding on a number of practical and constructive measures to decrease tensions in sensitive areas along the Blue Line. The UNIFIL Force Commander remains engaged with the Israel Defense Forces, with a view to securing agreement to renew the arrangements in place last year allowing farmers from Blida to access parts of their olive fields located south of the Blue Line.

30. After an almost year-long hiatus in visibly marking the Blue Line, the parties responded positively to the UNIFIL initiative to proceed with the marking of non-contentious points along the entire Blue Line. Over the past four months, UNIFIL was able to identify a list of 135 such points, which are now in the process of being measured and marked. As at 31 October, UNIFIL deminers had cleared access to 176 points to be marked; out of those points, 135 were measured, 106 Blue Line markers were constructed, and 97 markers were verified by both parties.

31. Since my last report, UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces identified key areas of focus for the strategic dialogue. Specifically, the Lebanese Armed Forces enumerated critical assets and materiel required to increase and enhance its capacity inside the UNIFIL area of operations and facilitate the gradual transferring of responsibilities from UNIFIL to the Lebanese Armed Forces. Subcommittees are now at work carrying out assessments to define a process to meet that goal. UNIFIL will work with the Lebanese Armed Forces to initiate a series of capability packages that, with the assistance of donors, would help the Lebanese Armed Forces gradually assume effective security control over the UNIFIL area of operations and Lebanese territorial waters as envisaged in my letter of 6 August 2009 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/407).

32. In its resolution 2004 (2011), the Security Council requested me to conduct a strategic review of UNIFIL in an effort to ensure that the Force is configured most appropriately to fulfil its mandated tasks. In that regard, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has consulted with a number of Member States and troop-contributing countries, as well as UNIFIL, on the best way forward. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in close coordination with UNIFIL, intends to complete the review by the end of 2011. I aim to present the review's major findings and conclusions to the Security Council early in 2012.

C. Disarming armed groups

33. As indicated in my previous reports, the maintenance of a substantial military capacity by Hizbullah and of weapons by other armed groups outside of the control of the Lebanese State, in direct breach of resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006), continued to pose a serious challenge to the ability of the Lebanese State to exercise full sovereignty over its territory.

34. Hizbullah continued to acknowledge that it maintained a substantial military arsenal separate from that of the Lebanese State, claiming it served defensive purposes against Israel. In a letter dated 25 August 2011 (S/2011/537), the Government of Israel reiterated its grave concerns concerning Hizbullah's continued armament and increased military capability in Lebanon.

35. In spite of the decision taken in 2006 by the National Dialogue of Lebanese leaders, and confirmed in subsequent meetings of the National Dialogue, no progress was made with regard to dismantling the military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and by Fatah al-Intifada. All but one of the bases are located along the Lebanese-Syrian border. Their presence continues to compromise Lebanese sovereignty and governmental authority. It also poses a challenge to the effective control of the eastern border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. I have called consistently upon the Lebanese authorities to dismantle the PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada military bases, and on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with these efforts.

36. The security situation in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ain el-Hilweh remained precarious. On 5 and 6 August, following an assassination attempt against the military commander of Fatah in Lebanon, heavy clashes between armed factions erupted in Ain el-Hilweh. A ceasefire was agreed upon after hours of fighting that left a number of people injured. A school of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade, causing material damages. Fears remain that the conditions of hardship inside the camp could strengthen radical militant groups operating inside it. Notwithstanding those incidents, Lebanese authorities deemed that cooperation on camp security with Palestinian security officials in the camps continued to be satisfactory. The President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, visited Lebanon from 16 to 19 August and stressed that Palestinian refugees in Lebanon had no need for weapons and must abide by Lebanon's domestic laws.

37. A rise in the number of security incidents took place during the reporting period, highlighting the threat to Lebanon's sovereignty posed by armed groups outside the control of the State and by the proliferation of weapons in the country. On 12 September, as a result of a personal dispute, fierce clashes involving the use of heavy weapons took place between militants of Hizbullah and armed Palestinians at the outskirts of Burj al-Barajneh refugee camp in Beirut, leaving several people injured. On 19 September, 16 people were also reportedly wounded in an armed clash that erupted between two local families in the district of Saida. In a positive development, the Estonian nationals who were kidnapped in March were released on 14 July. Subsequently, on 20 September, the Lebanese Internal Security Forces confronted the alleged kidnappers of the seven Estonian nationals in a West Bekaa village, and killed two men and arrested another four.

38. I continue to believe that the disarmament of armed groups should be carried out through a Lebanese-led process that will bring the full restoration of the authority of the Government of Lebanon over all its territory, so that there are no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than those of the State. Lebanese leaders committed to such a process in May 2008, when they decided to convene a National Dialogue Committee to agree on a national defence strategy, which, in turn, would have to consider the issue of weapons outside the control of the State. However, the National Dialogue Committee has not met since 4 November 2010. I welcome President Sleiman's assurance when I met him in New York on 22 September that he would re-convene the National Dialogue as soon as possible.

D. Arms embargo and border control

39. In resolution 1701 (2006), the Security Council decided that all States were to prevent the sale or the supply of arms and related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon by their nationals or from their territories or using their flag vessels or aircraft. The Government of Lebanon did not report any breach of the arms embargo imposed by resolution 1701 (2006). During a recent visit by my Special Coordinator to Israel, the Government of Israel reiterated its allegations of significant breaches of the arms embargo across the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. While the United Nations takes these allegations seriously, it is not in a position to verify this information independently.

40. The Security Council, in resolution 1701 (2006), also called upon the Government of Lebanon to secure its borders and other entry points to prevent the entry into Lebanon without its consent of arms and related materiel. Despite the commitment expressed by the Government of Lebanon in January 2010 to adopt a comprehensive national strategy for border management, no progress was made in this respect during the reporting period. Donors continued to share information and coordinate their support to Lebanon's security agencies for improved management of the border. However, the absence of a national strategy hampered the allocation of additional funds to that effort.

41. Lebanese authorities informed my Special Coordinator that the deployment of security personnel for the management of the border remained unchanged since my last report. The control of the northern border with the Syrian Arab Republic continued to be entrusted to the Common Border Force. On the eastern border, the Lebanese Armed Forces continues to deploy the second Border Regiment. Donors are considering providing training and equipment to the second Border Regiment and to the security agencies that operate the legal crossing points. The Lebanese Armed Forces still plans for the deployment of a third border regiment that would operate between the village of Arsal and the main crossing point of Masnaa.

42. The Lebanese Armed Forces informed the United Nations that the deterioration of the security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic had prompted it to adopt increased measures for the control of the border in order to prevent the entry of arms and military personnel into Lebanon. The Lebanese Armed Forces did not report incidents of arms smuggling from Syria to Lebanon. Notwithstanding that, other officials publicly stated that incidents of transfer of arms and fuel were taking place across the border in both directions.

43. The violence in Syrian towns close to the border with Lebanon prompted an influx of more than 5,000 persons across Lebanon's northern border since the beginning of April 2011. As at late October, over 3,100 Syrian nationals who fled the violence were registered jointly with the Government of Lebanon's High Relief Commission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The United Nations is coordinating closely with the Government of Lebanon on the provision of assistance to the displaced and on matters concerning their protection.

44. Over the reporting period, a number of cross-border incidents involving the Syrian army took place. In some instances, the Syrian army shot across the border into Lebanese territory, targeting individuals who attempted to flee Syria, resulting in at least one person killed. On other occasions, the Syrian Army conducted incursions into Lebanon both across the eastern and the northern borders, some of which extended to three kilometres into Lebanese territory. On one occasion, on 4 October, Syrian armoured personnel carriers raided the border area near Arsal village, causing substantial damage to private properties. Officials from the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Government of Lebanon consulted by the United Nations recognized the occurrence of incidents involving the Syrian army in the vicinity of border areas, but noted that the incidents took place in areas where the border was not delineated or demarcated, or even under dispute in some places. As a result, President Sleiman instructed the Lebanese Armed Forces to undertake contacts with the Syrian army with respect to the incursions so that the sovereignty of Lebanon would be respected.

45. The effective management of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic continued to be adversely affected by the fact that it was neither delineated nor demarcated, and by the continued presence of PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada military bases that straddle the border between the two countries.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

46. The Lebanese Mine Action Centre, is a unit of the Lebanese Armed Forces, is the national authority for mine action in Lebanon with full responsibility for the management of all humanitarian clearance. In September, the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre officially changed its name to the United Nations Mine Action Support Team to better reflect its role after it handed over coordination duties to the Lebanese Mine Action Centre in January 2009. The United Nations Mine Action Support Team continues to support the Lebanese Mine Action Centre in resource mobilization and liaison within its capability.

47. The United Nations Mine Action Support Team continues to provide support to UNIFIL demining activities on the Blue Line. During the reporting period, 12 additional cluster bomb strike locations were recorded, bringing the total to 1,147. The United Nations Mine Action Support Team also provided assistance to the Lebanese Mine Action Centre for victim assistance, as well as support to the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, hosted by Lebanon and held from 12 to 16 September. One hundred and thirty delegations participated in the proceedings, including more than 30 from non-signatory States who attended the Conference as observers.

F. Delineation of borders

48. The Security Council, in paragraph 4 of its resolution 1680 (2006), strongly encouraged the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to respond positively to the request of the Government of Lebanon to delineate their common border, especially in those areas where the border is uncertain or disputed. The Council reiterated this call in resolution 1701 (2006).

49. No progress was achieved during the reporting period towards the delineation and the demarcation of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic since my last report.

50. There was no progress on the issue of the Shab'a Farms area during the reporting period. In spite of my repeated requests, neither the Syrian Arab Republic nor Israel has responded to the provisional definition of the area contained in my report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/641), issued on 30 October 2007.

III. Security and safety of UNIFIL

51. On 26 July 2011, UNIFIL suffered its second direct terrorist attack within two months, when an explosion caused by a roadside bomb hit a UNIFIL logistics convoy south of the town of Saida, as it passed on the main coastal highway connecting Beirut to southern Lebanon. Six UNIFIL peacekeepers serving with the French contingent were injured, three of whom had to be transported to France for treatment. The attack occurred approximately seven kilometres south of the attack of 27 May that injured six UNIFIL peacekeepers serving with the Italian contingent (see S/2011/406). The Lebanese authorities and UNIFIL immediately launched an investigation into the incident. The French authorities are also investigating. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack. All senior Lebanese authorities, as well as political leaders from across the political spectrum, condemned the attack.

52. The Lebanese authorities informed UNIFIL that they were following a number of leads in the investigations into the two attacks against UNIFIL along the main coastal highway. The investigations were ongoing but no arrests had been made.

53. The 26 July attack demonstrated the persistence of the terrorist threat against UNIFIL, especially along its main supply route outside its area of operations. In response, UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities held several meetings to discuss the need for additional security measures, and the Lebanese Armed Forces has now reinforced its presence in key locations along UNIFIL's main supply route and accompanies all UNIFIL convoys north of the Litani River. In addition, Internal Security Forces patrols are focusing their activities on the coastal road, especially in the vicinity of Saida. For its part, UNIFIL implemented its own mitigation measures designed to complement the measures taken by the Government of Lebanon. Notwithstanding the obligations of all parties to ensure the safety and security of UNIFIL and the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon to maintain law and order, UNIFIL continuously reviewed its security plans and risk mitigation measures, and applied safety awareness training for its personnel and force protection works for installations and assets. UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities continued to cooperate to ensure that all security threats are addressed appropriately.

54. UNIFIL continued to observe proceedings in the Lebanese military court against individuals accused of planning to carry out attacks against UNIFIL. On 10 October, 10 individuals accused of possessing weapons and explosives and planning attacks against Lebanese military and security establishments and UNIFIL were sentenced to prison. In a similar case, three individuals appeared in court on 29 September. The court adjourned until 18 November.

IV. Deployment of UNIFIL

55. As at 31 October, the total military strength of UNIFIL was 12,488, including 522 women. As at 31 October, the Force had 353 international and 663 national civilian staff members, of whom 100 and 170, respectively, were women. UNIFIL is also supported by 53 United Nations Truce Supervision Organization military observers of the Observer Group Lebanon, seven of whom are women.

56. UNIFIL has implemented most of the key recommendations of the joint Department of Peacekeeping Operations/UNIFIL technical review. The Irish battalion completed its deployment in late June and reached full operational capability within its area of responsibility. That deployment enabled the French battalion to complete its merger into the Force Commander's reserve, which has become an important asset at the disposal of the Head of Mission and Force Commander.

57. Italy informed the Department of Peacekeeping Operations that it would reduce its contribution to UNIFIL in November, necessitating some reconfiguration of UNIFIL's deployment, particularly in Sector West. At the same time, additional military personnel from Malaysia were deployed in October. The Danish multirole logistics company will be replaced in November by an Austrian multirole logistics company. An additional Indonesian vessel joined the maritime task force in October, and Brazil will deploy a flagship to the maritime task force by mid-November.

58. The Government of Lebanon continued to place land and facilities at the disposal of UNIFIL for its deployment. However, the issue of rental arrears, owed by the Government to private landowners, gave rise to some negative public sentiment against UNIFIL. As a consequence, UNIFIL experienced some minor restrictions in its freedom of movement. On 21 September, the Government of Lebanon approved the payment of outstanding rental arrears to owners of properties used by UNIFIL, some of which dated back many years.

V. Observations

59. I am encouraged that the situation remained generally stable in Lebanon, in particular in the UNIFIL area of operations. I welcome the commitment to resolution 1701 (2006) made by the Government of Lebanon established on 7 July, and its expression of support to UNIFIL. I also welcome the continued commitment by the Government of Israel to the resolution and its support for UNIFIL. I am also encouraged by the commitment of the Governments of Israel and Lebanon to maintaining the cessation of hostilities and by the quick containment of incidents through the established security arrangements, particularly the UNIFIL liaison and coordination mechanism. However, I remain concerned by the stagnation in the

implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), and I call on both Israel and Lebanon to meet fully their obligations under the resolution.

60. I reiterate my strong condemnation of the attack on 26 July against UNIFIL personnel that injured six peacekeepers. The security and safety of UNIFIL personnel remains a critical priority. The Government of Lebanon is obliged to ensure the safety and security of UNIFIL, including through effective countermeasures, and to bring the perpetrators of all attacks against UNIFIL to justice. I welcome the cooperation of the Lebanese authorities with UNIFIL to improve the protection of the Force's main logistical supply route, as well as the commitments expressed to me in September by President Sleiman and Prime Minister Mikati to do everything possible to protect United Nations personnel.

61. As reiterated in my letter to the Security Council of 5 August (S/2011/488) and my previous reports, the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and the safety and security of its personnel are integral to the effective execution of its tasks. Although UNIFIL conducts most of its operational activities, I am concerned that incidents that impede the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and endanger the safety and security of peacekeepers continue to occur. I am particularly concerned that several of these incidents have included the violent assault of UNIFIL personnel, and some have shown an organized character. This casts doubt on the motives of those involved. The primary responsibility for ensuring the freedom of movement to UNIFIL personnel in the area of operations lies with the Lebanese authorities. I call on the Lebanese authorities to take firm, resolute action against the perpetrators, and to find ways to work with UNIFIL to strengthen the response and the investigation into these incidents. Effective measures must be taken to curb and prevent all incidents that impede the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and endanger the safety and security of peacekeepers.

62. Sporadic tensions and incidents took place during the reporting period, the most serious of which was the brief exchange of fire between soldiers of the Lebanese Armed Forces and Israel Defense Forces on 1 August. I am worried that the situation along the Blue Line remains fragile and is likely to remain so until the outstanding issues between Lebanon and Israel are resolved in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006).

63. In this regard, I reiterate my call on the parties to take advantage of the strategic environment that UNIFIL, in cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, has helped to establish, and to move towards implementing the primary objectives of resolution 1701 (2006), namely, the securing of a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution to the conflict. It will be difficult to maintain the current strategic environment and the security arrangements unless there is movement towards these objectives.

64. In the meantime, it is imperative that both parties remain fully committed to the cessation of hostilities; fully respect the Blue Line in its entirety; continue working with UNIFIL on pragmatic and constructive confidence-building measures along the Blue Line, including visibly marking the Blue Line; and work to strengthen the liaison and coordination mechanism. I especially want to emphasize that the parties must avoid the use of fire in any circumstances, except where clearly required in immediate self-defence. I call on both parties to act at all times with maximum restraint and responsibility with regard to the cessation of hostilities.

65. There are also other actions that each party must carry out respectively. For Israel, that includes the withdrawal of Israel Defense Forces soldiers from the northern part of Ghajar and the adjacent areas north of the Blue Line and the full cessation of violations of Lebanese airspace. For Lebanon, that includes exercising effective authority over all Lebanese territory and ensuring the implementation of Government decisions and stipulations of resolution 1701 (2006) with respect to an area free of armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government and of UNIFIL.

66. Five years after UNIFIL significantly expanded its activities and personnel following the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), it is timely to conduct a strategic review of the Force. I look forward to the strategic dialogue process enabling the Lebanese Armed Forces to start to take on a greater share of the security responsibilities stemming from resolution 1701 (2006). The strategic dialogue aims to identify Lebanese Armed Forces requirements for implementing tasks mandated in resolution 1701 (2006), and facilitate the gradual transfer of responsibilities from UNIFIL to the Lebanese Armed Forces. I am grateful to those countries that provide critical support in equipping and training the Lebanese Armed Forces, including the navy, and urge the international community to increase its support. It remains essential that the international community assist the Lebanese Armed Forces to build its capacity.

67. The political stability that has prevailed in Lebanon since the establishment of the Government on 7 July, including in the light of the release of indictments against four individuals by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon on 30 June, is encouraging. I urge the Government of Lebanon to demonstrate its commitment to all Security Council resolutions in a tangible manner through relevant actions on the ground.

68. I note with concern the increase in the occurrence of security incidents in Lebanon, which highlights the continuous threat posed by armed groups outside the control of the State and by the proliferation of arms in the country.

69. The presence of Hizbullah and other armed groups operating outside the control of the State poses a continuous threat to Lebanon's sovereignty and stability, and hampers the full implementation of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). I call on Lebanese leaders to persevere in the domestic political process aimed at the disarmament of armed groups operation outside the control of the State. I very much regret that the National Dialogue Committee has been in abeyance for over a year. In this context, and with a new Government now in place, I encourage President Sleiman to reconvene the National Dialogue Committee as soon as possible, and call on Lebanese leaders to make progress towards the adoption of a national defence strategy that would address armed groups operating outside the control of the State and lead to their disarmament. I also call on the Government of Prime Minister Mikati to implement decisions taken in the past by the National Dialogue Committee.

70. I am concerned by the continued presence of the PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada military bases in Lebanon. They pose a challenge to Lebanon's ability to manage its borders and undermine Lebanese sovereignty. I reiterate my call on the Government of Lebanon to dismantle these military bases, as agreed upon by the National Dialogue in 2006 and reiterated since, and on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to fully cooperate with these efforts.

71. I call upon all Member States to prevent transfers of arms and related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon without the consent of the Lebanese State. I urge the new Government of Lebanon to further its efforts to control the country's borders, including by adopting the comprehensive border management strategy to which the previous Government committed in 2010. I am grateful to Member States that are providing assistance for the improvement of Lebanon's border management capacity, and call upon the international community to support the implementation of Lebanon's comprehensive border strategy once it is adopted.

72. Efforts to delineate and demarcate the common border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic should proceed without delay, starting with the activation of the joint Lebanese-Syrian border committee. The delineation of the border is critical to a positive relationship between the two countries. I urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with the Government of Lebanon in taking concrete and practical steps towards achieving the delineation and demarcation of its common border with Lebanon, in accordance with resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1680 (2006).

73. I also intend to continue my efforts aimed at finding a diplomatic solution to the issue of the Shab'a Farms area in accordance with paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006). I must recognize, however, that these efforts are hampered by the unwillingness of Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic to resolve the issue at this time. I call, once again, upon these two countries to submit their responses to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area that I provided in October 2007 (see S/2007/641).

74. The situation of Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon continues to be a matter of concern. I call on the Government of Lebanon to implement the amendments to the Lebanese Labour Code and Social Security Law that were adopted in August 2010, in order to effectively improve the prospects for employment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. I am very concerned by the continued funding shortfalls faced by UNRWA, both for the reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared camp and for its regular programmes aimed at delivering basic education and health care to the Palestinian refugees. I urge donors, including countries in the region, to continue, and if possible increase, their support for UNRWA. Progress in ensuring the full realization of the rights of Palestinian refugees is without prejudice to the resolution of the Palestinian refugee question in the context of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace agreement.

75. I thank my former Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Michael Williams, upon the completion of his tour of duty in Lebanon, for his leadership and devotion in carrying out the important work of the United Nations in Lebanon. I wish to commend the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander and all the military and civilian personnel of UNIFIL, who continue to play a critical role in helping to promote peace and stability in southern Lebanon, as well as all the staff of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Lebanon.

76. I remain keenly aware that the implementation by Israel and Lebanon of their obligations under resolution 1701 (2006) is influenced by dynamics affecting the region as a whole. In recent months, the region has been swept by a wave of popular protests and political change.

77. I remain deeply concerned about the impact of the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic on the political and security situation in Lebanon. I strongly deplore the violent incursions and raids into Lebanese towns and villages by Syrian security forces that resulted in death and injury. I call upon the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cease such incursions and to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). These incursions and the ongoing political and human rights crisis in Syria carry the potential of igniting further tensions inside Lebanon and beyond.

78. I call on both Israel and Lebanon to take the necessary steps to achieve what resolution 1701 (2006) terms a long-term solution governing their relations. It continues to be my profound conviction that achieving that solution and ensuring the full territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon cannot and should not be dissociated from the need to exert all possible efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, on the basis of the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1515 (2003).